

## Revivals And Church History :: Repentance Must Precede Revival

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### Repentance Must Precede Revival

By Jesse Raley

In 2 Chronicles 15:12-15 we read the secret of a most remarkable revival that took place in Asa's reign over Judah: "And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; that who soever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. And they swore unto the Lord with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought Him with their whole desire; and He was found of them; and the Lord gave them rest round about." (Read Jer. 29:11-13.)

"With all your heart" is a big expression and demand upon us. It means no idols – we seek and worship only the true and living God. Perhaps that is our test; we have not offered Him all our heart and all we are and have.

Revival calls for a complete turn from sin – forsake our wicked ways. One has written, "No Achan must remain unrebuked and unrepentant in the camp or Ai will not fall. It will pay us to reread the seventh chapter in the book of Joshua as a great lesson on revival. Joshua's prayer was desperate: 'O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?' (vv. 8-9).

"It is God's honor that is at stake as well as ours. And still the answer comes to us as it came to Joshua many years ago: 'Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing' (v. 11). No victory can be expected while sin is unconfessed. Repentance must precede revival. God cannot do His mighty works while wickedness prevails within. 'Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you' (v. 12). Only when the offence is removed can the battle be won. That is how it must always be. Unless God's people are prepared to turn from their wicked ways the door to revival is closed. Let Psalm 139:23-24 be the cry of our soul... 'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'"

Revival blessing comes from the hand of the Lord to bring renewal to the face of the earth. It fulfills the Scripture promise: "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth" (Psa. 72:6). Perhaps we feel as "grass" that has been mown. That is good. As the earth, we are to "let the earth open" and receive the showers that would water the earth. It seems hard for His servants to get away from struggle, effort, working up something, driving force. We want to feel we have done something. We drive our fellowship to greater endeavors.

Oh, but the work is the Lord's and not ours; it won't come through frenzy or our own zeal. It is not what we do for God but what He does for us that constitutes revival. Would that we could accept these blessings as a bestowal from God's bounty! We still are suffering under the fallacy of work, and must come out of it.

We see the importance of the openness of faith. "I the Lord have created it" (Isa. 45:8). It all comes from above. We shall magnify His Majesty. Oh, to enter into that true worship and receive! channel! impart! and have imparted unto! "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides Me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me; that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:5-6).

### The Great Paradox of Revival

Revival is the free bestowal of God, yet it is costly and must be preceded by the sacrifice of His people. Dark pages of history and painful years or seasons of captivity, adversity, suffering and failure show up in scriptural stories of the revival of God's people. One of the greatest examples is taken up in 1 Samuel, chapter 7. "And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only: and He will deliver you...." (v. 3).

This is a most marvelous example of divine intervention and with the price to be paid for revival. It can be encouraging to us who almost despair of any sort of revival of things spiritual. It looks bad to us today, but read of their condition at that time. Things were at a perilously low ebb, dire adversity for years, beaten in battle by the Philistine enemy, now reduced to abject serfdom. Their lives were not their own.

"The worship of Jehovah had virtually ceased—declined even before the military catastrophe. Eli had allowed his profligate and greedy sons to usurp the sacred authority of the priesthood and to abuse it for their own iniquitous ends. The people had fallen into indifference if not into actual apostasy. Then came the Philistine invasion to administer a stunning blow to the external expression of religion in the regular ritual of worship....The ark of God, which had degenerated into a superstitious symbol was captured by the foe....the national shrine at Shiloh was devastated.... such was the condition of the nation on the eve of revival. The outlook could hardly have been less favorable."

It is in a midnight hour such as this, and in such a time as we face today that the Lord is about to bless His people. The House of Israel was lamenting after the Lord. It seems that "God is more prized when withdrawn." "At long last His chosen began to yearn for Him again. There was an aching void within that the world could never fill. The broken cisterns had failed as they always do. The people lamented after the Lord 'as a child follows the father who had been forced to turn away in anger...and with sighs and tears entreats for reconciliation.'"

"Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee? Show us Thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us Thy salvation" (Psa. 139:6-7).

**Re: Repentance Must Precede Revival - posted by enid, on: 2006/9/18 7:44**

We know that God's honour is at stake, yet the church, by and large seem indifferent to revival.

Yes, I know revival is happening around the world, thank God for that!

However, we want God to act without upsetting the status quo. In other words, move God, without our repentance, without any sacrifice on our part, without being searched and known.

It won't happen on those terms, only on God's. God bless.

**Re: - posted by IRONMAN (), on: 2006/9/18 11:01**

brethren

it is most sobering, as our Lord had me listen to and they crucified Him and Art KATza spoke of the shallowness of our faith, it was most convicting. Many expect to be raptured out of here without first repenting or being revived. can anyone honestly say we can bypass these 2 and be rapture ready? are we without spot, wrinkle or any such thing?

let us fall on our faces and repent lest we be deceived into thinking we are ready when we are not and be disappointed.